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Anti-vaccine-mandate truck convoy passing through Alberta on way to Ottawa

Nearly $3M raised for convoy through GoFundMe campaign as of 9:30 p.m. Sunday

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A truck convoy is passing through Alberta, on its way to Ottawa to protest the vaccine mandate for truckers. The convoy is shown here on Highway 2. (Donna McElligott/CBC)

A national truck convoy is making its way through Alberta on Sunday, before heading toward Ottawa, to protest the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for truckers that cross the Canada-United States border.

The convoy is split into several routes. Part of the western route — which passes through Alberta — launched from Prince Rupert, B.C., Saturday morning and stopped overnight stop in Prince George, B.C. It left there Sunday morning, and is scheduled to arrive in Edmonton in the afternoon, then in Calgary Sunday night.

A second contingent of the convoy launched from Vancouver Saturday morning. It is scheduled to join the other truckers in Calgary Sunday night.

In November, the federal government announced new protocols for unvaccinated people travelling across the Canada-U.S. border. Part of that announcement included changes in the new year for groups of travellers who were exempt from entry requirements, such as truck drivers.

- **Public Health Agency of Canada involved in 'error' on trucker vaccine rules: CP sources**

As of Jan. 15, unvaccinated or partially vaccinated Canadian truck drivers, among others, entering the country must get a PCR test outside of Canada within 72 hours of planned entry; get tested when they arrive; and then self-test on Day 8 of a mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

Canada Unity, an anti-public-health-mandate group, organized the truck convoy to Ottawa. According to the group's website, the convoy should arrive in the country's capital by Jan. 29.

"It's about the mandates, all of them. Masks, the passports, the shutting down our businesses," said James Bauder, a supporter in Calgary.

Bauder added that he thinks the medical industry is highly politicized, especially right now.

Lee Parkinson, a supporter in Edmonton, said she used to be employed by the Government of Alberta, but was placed on unpaid leave because she refused to get the COVID-19 vaccine. She has been involved in Action4Canada, a group suing the B.C. provincial and federal governments over the implementation of public health measures.

She said she was hopeful the convoy could bring about some changes she hopes to see.

"They're big and they're noisy and they could probably draw a lot of attention," she said.

Nearly $3 million has been raised for this convoy through a GoFundMe campaign, which says the money will be paid to the truckers so they can afford going to Ottawa.

Around 39,000 people have donated as of 9:30 p.m. Sunday. There are several dozen multi-thousand-dollar donations, including two for $10,000.

- **Critics, industry call on Ottawa to reconsider trucker vaccine mandate to protect supply chains**

Tamara Lich, an Albertan, created the campaign on Jan. 14. Lich is affiliated with the Maverick Party, a federal right-wing political party formerly known as Wexit Canada.

CTA denounces protest

The Canadian Trucking Alliance (CTA), a national federation of provincial trucking associations, issued a statement Sunday, denouncing protests on highways, roads and bridges — while suggesting lawful protest on Parliament Hill.

"CTA believes such actions — especially those that interfere with public safety — are not how disagreements with government policies should be expressed," the statement said.

The federation suggests members opt to hold organized protests on Parliament Hill, or contact their local MP, according to the statement.

The CTA says most people in the industry are vaccinated and that the vaccination rate among truck drivers is similar to that of the general public.

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